

# BRAIN FEVER AND SWOONS.

Old-Time Novelist's Favorite Afflictions Seldom Heard Of Now.

"Now that readers have become so confounded exacting in matters of technical detail," said a New Orleans physician who confesses to a weakness for fiction, "our modern novel writers are deprived of a good deal of material that was used with great effect by their predecessors. This is particularly true of a little catalogue of diseases that figure conspicuously in what we are accustomed to refer to as 'standard fiction'—meaning the fiction that was admired by our fathers and grandfathers, and that now comes in 'sets,' especially suitable for Christmas presents.

"At the head of the list was a mysterious malady known as 'brain fever.' Brain fever was a great favorite with the early novelist, and has kept many a plot from getting into a tight snarl. It was supposed to result from any severe mental strain, and might be brought on by terror, joy, remorse, overwork, suspense, rage, or grief. So you see how handy it was. It could strike down the villain, temporarily disable the heroine or excite one's sympathy for the poor but virtuous hero.

"The old-time 'standard' novels will average about three cases of brain fever to the volume," quotes the Times-Democrat. "The author never went into any details, but generally announced the malady as a telling climax to a chapter—for example: 'He was too late; Grace was already tossing in the delirium of brain fever;' or, 'Next morning the scoundrel awoke raving; he had brain fever.' The disease is so well established in fiction that many people still believe that it occurs in real life, which, by the way, is a fine tribute to genius.

"Another valuable 'property effect' of the old-time novelist was the swoon. You will find characters swooning all through the famous romances of 50 years ago, and the typical beautiful heroine of a good, rattling tale of adventure spent at least five per cent. of her time in that condition. The heroine, it is worth noting, was generally the only person in the book who 'swooned.' The hero, after being wounded in a duel or used up by some deed of daring, quite frequently 'fainted from exhaustion,' and the villain simply 'pressed his hand to his brow and fell senseless to the ground,' but it all came to the same thing, and was a very convenient piece of literary machinery.

"The people in modern 'realistic' novels faint very seldom; in fact, almost as infrequently as they faint in actual life. In practicing medicine for a quarter of a century I have seen human beings under almost every stress that could be imagined, but I have never yet seen anyone lose consciousness through emotion only."

## QUEER FOOD FOR HORSES.

Graminivorous Animals Occasionally Have a Liking for Strange Provender.

I have found, says a writer in the Contemporary Review, that the addition of a pound of fair quality of moist brown sugar to a horse feed of chaff and corn doubles its work producing power and that, therefore, the ordinary feed may with this aid be greatly reduced in weight without proportionally reducing the efficiency of the animal getting it. When no other feed is obtainable a few pounds of flour, mixed with enough water to make them easily drinkable, have great staying power, but few horses would take this, however hungry, unless they had at some previous time been made accustomed to it. I have known horses, when there was little grass, habitually rob the camp of fresh, salt or dried meat. It is even more certain that no horse would touch flesh unless at some time accustomed to it.

What strange food graminivorous animals will eat when habituated to it is almost beyond belief. In Iceland horses and cattle are frequently fed on dried fish. I have known sheep eat meat, fruit, bread, pastry and the like, and even tobacco in considerable quantity without harm ensuing. During the early times of the diggings, when gold was being found in large quantities and horse feed, beyond the grass, was not procurable, many of the rich claim holders fed the horses used in their work on the mine with bread sooner than suffer delay. Bread, even unleavened, is better food for horses than raw flour and water, but it takes time to prepare and is rarely available on an emergency, while flour is much more likely to be in Singapore it is not uncommon for horses to be given a loaf of bread soaked with a bottle of beer, which they eat greedily.

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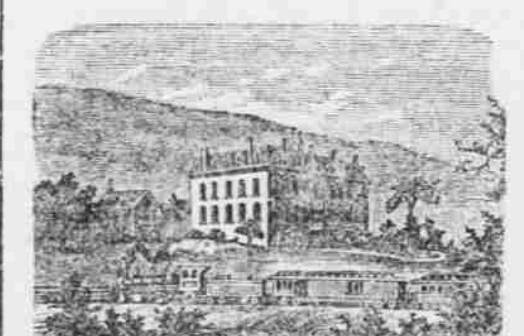
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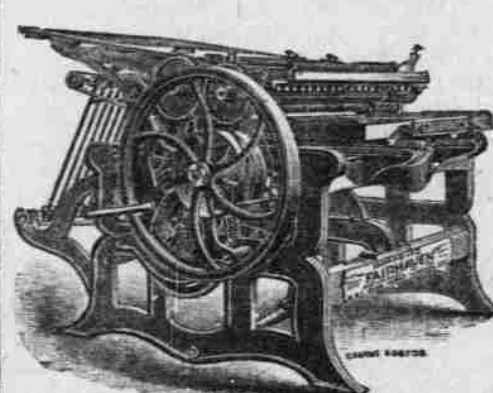
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